United Nations A/C.3/58/SR.40

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
25 May 2004
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 40th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 November 2003, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Priputen (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Slovakia)

Contents

Agenda item 117: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*continued*)

Organization of work

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

03-60841 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon), Mr. Priputen (Slovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 117: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms *(continued)* (A/58/118, A/58/118/Corr.1, A/58/121, A/58/181, A/58/181/Add.1, A/58/185, A/58/185/Add.1, A/58/185/Add.2, A/58/186, A/58/212, A/58/255, A/58/257, A/58/261, A/58/266, A/58/268, A/58/275, A/58/276, A/58/276/Add.1, A/58/279, A/58/296, A/58/309, A/58/317, A/58/318, A/58/330, A/58/380, A/58/533 and A/C.3/58/9)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives *(continued)* (A/58/219, A/58/448, A/58/127, A/58/427, A/58/379, A/58/334, A/58/218, A/58/338, A/58/534, A/58/325, A/58/393, A/58/421 A/58/427, A/58/534 and A/C.3/58/6)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights *(continued)* (A/58/36)

1. **Mr. Deng** (Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons) replied to questions by several delegations concerning his report (A/58/393). Sudan, having stressed the importance of the Conference on Internal Displacement in the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Sub-Region (Khartoum, September 2003), which could serve as an example for activities carried out together with sub-regional organizations, had expressed concern over encounters between the Special Representative and the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SLM/SPLA). The Special Representative explained that the laborious preparation of the encounters – which had been postponed several times – had perhaps given the Sudanese authorities a wrong impression about the conduct of the discussions, but the truth was that he had maintained contact with the leaders of both parties throughout the process. On grounds of national sovereignty, the Sudanese Government wished that the encounters should follow a definite order giving priority to the Government. The Special Representative stressed that he had never had the intention to offend the Sudanese Government and recalled his work with UNICEF and his leading role in the dialogue with Khartoum.

2. The Special Representative thanked Mexico for the frank and productive discussions held during his mission there and welcomed Mexico's acceptance to host the regional Conference on internal displacements in Latin America.

3. Replying to Switzerland in respect of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), particularly on the importance of coordination within the United Nations system and at the sub-regional level, the Special Representative explained that during the OSCE's recent information meeting, which had been very satisfactory, he had held constructive and productive discussions with many ambassadors.

4. The Special Representative then referred to questions asked by Italy on behalf of the European Union. First, although the Guiding Principles had been established only five years earlier, the outcome was excellent in terms of progress achieved, international and national acceptance of the principles and application of the principles by various actors. Their dissemination and their use in policy formulation were still in their infancy and their broad acceptance and implementation should be encouraged.

5. The Special Representative would continue to cooperate with various bodies in view of the preparation of seminars, workshops and training activities, seeking the involvement of local organizations and academic establishments; to support research for evaluating existing legislations in relation to the Guiding Principles; and to have the research results made public. Under the Guiding Principles, displaced persons should be informed of their rights and made aware that, beyond the humanitarian aspects of their situation, they enjoyed, as human beings, rights that the authorities should respect.

6. Report A/58/393 showed that cooperation is the institutional process preferred by the international community and no other solution could currently be envisaged. The system, however, was not perfect and the function of the various organizations should be harmonized. The governments – to the extent that they

became aware of the issue of displaced persons – were starting to reform their policies and favour openness. Thanks to the international context and the active interest of the United Nations and the international community in the issue of displaced persons, certain institutions currently seemed more responsive, after a period of non-involvement caused by sovereignty considerations and the position of various governments. A survey conducted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on protection issues, the mandate of the Special Representative and an evaluation currently carried out by the Unit on Internal Displacements were expected to lead to the formulation of recommendations for improving the situation.

7. As suggested by the Secretary-General, some issues belonging to the area of responsibility of the Special Representative had been assigned to an independent research institute that was better equipped to treat them. The Brookings-SAIS Project on internal displacements had been launched as a result. The subject of research included the definition of the end of a displacement, the responsibility of national institutions and non-governmental actors, the role of donors, the relation between certain parts of the research programme and the economic context, and the promotion of dialogue between professionals and academics.

8. Lastly, criteria had been established for selecting the countries that would be visited during future missions. In particular, those criteria concerned the gravity of the problem in a given country, the national and international impact of the situation, the expected positive outcome, geographic distribution and coverage. The list of countries that could be visited was long. Some missions had been approved while a reply was awaited on others.

9. Azerbaijan had brought up the important issue of cooperation with regional organizations involved in peacekeeping activities. Generally speaking, the missions undertaken aimed at dealing with displaced persons and seeking solutions for their return, re-adaptation and reintegration, but it was also necessary to try to identify and remedy the causes and consequences of the displacements. The Guiding Principles involved prevention, responding to displacements and providing sustainable solutions to the problem. The Special Representative systematically concluded his reports and declarations by referring to the issue of the causes of displacements, even though strictly speaking that issue was not covered by his mandate. The Special Representative endeavoured to maintain contact with the bodies that participated in the peace process and therefore played a role linked to his own activities.

10. Norway had inquired about the areas in which international action and cooperation should mainly take place. The Special Representative believed that any concerted international approach should include the displaced persons of all areas concerned. Such an approach should mobilize actors with various competencies, transcend institutional roles and include direct contact with the population groups affected. But such comprehensive action, to be efficient, presupposed extensive cooperation. Once various roles had been assigned to the actors on the basis of their capacities, questions of responsibility should be settled by defining lines of command and reporting. The Special Representative hoped that the current evaluation exercise would answer those questions.

11. Replying to Japan's question on the state of relations between the United Nations and the various governments and on the difficulties arising in that connection, the Special Representative said that there were two distinct aspects to the question. In countries with displaced persons in their territory, United Nations activities consisted mainly in entering into a dialogue with the government, raising the population's awareness, building the country's capacities to deal with the issue and providing international cooperation as a supplement to the country's own efforts. Regarding the donor community, the objective was concerted action, broad in scope and with tangible outcomes in the field.

12. Armenia asked the Special Representative whether the issue of displaced persons did not come within the competence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). That query led to the recurring question of whether responsibility for humanitarian activities in a given country should rest exclusively with a lead organization or whether all of the actors should act in concert. The second option did not signify that bodies capable of assuming important responsibilities should not be allowed to do so but that roles should be distributed among the actors on the basis of their comparative advantages, in a spirit of cooperation and with effectiveness in the field as the sole criterion.

13. **Mr. Ziegler** (Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food), introducing his report (A/58/330) in accordance with resolution 57/226 of the General Assembly and resolution 2003/25 of the Commission on Human Rights, said that his statement would revolve around five major thrusts.

14. The war against hunger had receded, as the revealing figures published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) indicated: although agriculture could easily feed 12 billion persons (twice the world population), the number of people suffering from malnutrition had increased from 815 million in 2001 to 840 million in 2002. That paradox showed that solving definitively the global problem of hunger was not objectively impossible and consequently the right to food was a requirement to be met in all urgency.

15. In accordance with resolution 57/226, the Special Rapporteur had carried out two main activities under his mandate: on the one hand, he had cooperated with the Intergovernmental Working Group to elaborate a set of voluntary guidelines on the right to food and, on the other hand, he had been on mission to the Occupied Palestinian territories. The dramatic situation of 3.8 million Palestinians, 61 per cent of whom suffered from chronic malnutrition, was developing into a real humanitarian disaster, essentially because of the policy implemented by Israel in the name of security (encircling villages, expropriating land and imposing curfews). The alarming statistics published by the World Bank showed that, if Israel persisted in constructing the "security fence" (term used by the Israeli Government to designate the wall), it would be extremely difficult for the future Palestinian State to ensure its population the right to food.

16. In accordance with resolution 2001/25 of the Commission on Human Rights [E/2000 3/23 (Part I)], the Special Rapporteur had integrated a gender perspective in the activities under his mandate. Stressing that persisting gender discrimination, especially in the rural areas, prevented full recognition of women's right to food, he explained that the causes of discrimination, whether of a social, legislative or traditional character, were linked to underlying macroeconomic parameters.

17. Transnational corporations currently exercised unprecedented control over the food chain. A way should be found to ensure that they respected human rights, particularly the right to food. The fact that the issue would be a core topic of debate at the European Social Forum scheduled to start in Paris on 12 November 2003 showed that problems related to non-State actors were an object of concern. Using as an example Nestlé, a Swiss corporation, the Special Rapporteur pointed out that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had declared the States were responsible for their multinational corporations' conduct outside their country of origin. In that connection, he referred to the national instruments and jurisprudence of South Africa, the United States and Myanmar, among others, and welcomed the self-regulatory measures that many multinational corporations had already adopted with regard to their practices abroad. He hailed in particular the 41 measures taken by the Brazilian Government under the "Fome Zero" programme of combating hunger and the obligations imposed therein on national and international enterprises in relation to the right to food. Stating that the issue involved extremely complex analytical problems that were just beginning to encourage a new line of thought, the Special Rapporteur pointed out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 had intended to impose limits on abuse of power by States but that, in view of globalization, amplified legal instruments were necessary to curb abuse of power by transnational corporations and compel them to respect the right to food.

18. Concluding, the Special Rapporteur explained that, although equity was measurably retreating as the number of human lives annihilated by hunger continuously increased, the resolve of Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, China, Bangladesh and others, to fight for the right to food showed that the concept of "claimable equity" forged by the German philosopher Theodore Adorno, had evolved and given birth, particularly during the 2003 World Trade Organization (WTO) Summit at Cancun, to the idea of food sovereignty, defined as the obligation of each State to feed its population.

19. Quoting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in "The Social Contract" affirmed that "between the weak and the strong, freedom oppressed and law liberated", the Special Rapporteur reiterated that the right to food was a requirement to be met in all urgency.

20. **Mr. de Stefani Spadafora** (Italy) asked the Special Rapporteur what measures he proposed for eliminating discrimination against women in relation to food; whether the Special Rapporteur, in addition to the positive developments in Brazil and Sierra Leone, to which he had referred, could recommend to developing countries specific policies to improve access to food; and what relevant political decisions should be encouraged.

21. **Mr. Luria** (Israel) said he was seriously concerned over the content of the report, its politicized and biased style, and the Special Rapporteur's introduction. Israel was all the more offended since its sincere efforts to cooperate as much as possible with the Special Rapporteur, provide him with all the necessary information and enter into a constructive and serious dialogue with him had only culminated in the formulation of unfounded allegations against it.

22. The report was rife with political affirmations on matters unrelated to the Special Rapporteur's mandate, often prejudging issues which had to be settled through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

23. That thoroughly subjective report failed to refer to Palestinian responsibility in the ongoing human-rights violations and terrorist acts in as clear and unequivocal terms as those used in other passages. The Special Rapporteur had preferred to keep quiet about the active role of Palestinian leaders who, in declarations to the press, during local ceremonies, in summer camps and in mosques condoned homicidal terrorism and encouraged attacks against innocent Israeli civilians.

24. It was particularly regrettable that the report only referred fleetingly and for the sake of form to the havoc worked by terrorism among the Israelis, without providing details on the terrible daily attacks and their context. The report disregarded Israel's security dilemmas and its fight against homicidal Palestinian terrorism, one of Israel's most difficult combats. In a very simplistic description of the complex situation prevailing in the territories, it failed to mention the systematic violations carried out by Palestinians and prompting Israel's recourse to indispensable and defensive security measures. Time and again, the Special Rapporteur had described the crisis in the territories as "man-induced", thereby insinuating that Israel was responsible for it – although doubtlessly the "man-induced" element par excellence in that situation was homicidal terrorism, funded, encouraged, and organized by the organizations that encouraged it.

25. Despite adverse conditions and terrorism's daily threat to Israel and its citizens, the Israeli authorities were resolved to persevere in their efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in the territories. At the same time, the terrorists operated by hiding among the civilians, disregarding the life of civilians in pursuing their own objectives, taking advantage of the emblems of the United Nations and of humanitarian organizations and misusing religious sites, ambulances and their personnel in order to secretly bring in arms and terrorist killers, in flagrant violation of the standards and elementary principles of international law and humanity.

26. Instead of contributing to the resumption of peace negotiations, the report gave the Palestinians a clear signal that the United Nations was a body that could effectively help them evade the peace process. The report would greatly encourage those actively involved in the escalation of violence and terrorism; and trouble and disappoint profoundly those who still hoped for a peaceful negotiated settlement.

27. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) welcomed the honesty and courage displayed by the Special Rapporteur in introducing the report. He pointed out that his mandate concerned the right to food and not security matters. The Special Rapporteur had addressed a very important issue, the situation of the Palestinian people who lived under Israeli occupation. The vast majority of Palestinians were experiencing a humanitarian disaster that would be compounded when Israel completed the construction of the blatantly illegal wall. The representative of Egypt therefore requested the Special Rapporteur to provide further details on the extent of that foreseeable catastrophe.

28. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein) welcomed the fact that the Special Rapporteur in his report (A/58/330) had begun to study the gender aspects of the right to food and took note of his intention to further examine that issue. In that connection, the representative of Liechtenstein suggested that a particular aspect of the issue, namely women's crucial role in food security, which was discussed in paragraph 14 of the report, should receive greater attention in the future. The fundamental role of women with regard to food security should be underscored along with the important recommendations formulated

at the end of the report, stressing that women were victims of discrimination and their right to food should be protected. Liechtenstein therefore suggested that a study be carried out on that topic in the regions where women had a role to play in society.

29. Concerning the extent to which transnational corporations should respect international human-rights standards, two contradictory replies were offered: section III of the report, devoted to the difficult and complex issue of those corporations, stated that they had an obligation to respect the right to food in line with the relevant international instruments, while paragraph 62 affirmed the necessity of formulating compulsory legal rules that would oblige the corporations to comply with human-rights standards and would prevent any abuse of their power. Liechtenstein concurred with the second statement.

30. The speaker asked the Special Rapporteur for his view on the responsibility of non-governmental bodies as a whole. That was an important issue, unfortunately neglected so far.

31. **Mr. Koubaa** (Tunisia) supported fully the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, whose laudable efforts were based on the idea of interdependence and integral application of all human rights – economic, political, social and cultural.

32. **Mrs. Rasheed** (Palestine) thanked the Special Rapporteur for his unremitting efforts to draw attention to the predicament of the Palestinians, victims of Israeli occupation, and the impact of that situation on their families, which could not even feed their children, more and more of whom were suffering from malnutrition on a long-term basis.

33. Concerning the Special Rapporteur's mission to the Occupied Territories from 3 to 13 July 2003, the Observer asked when the report on that visit would be available. She urged the delegations to read it in order to better understand the gravity of the situation created by the massive violation of the Palestinian populations' right to food and water.

34. She condemned the Israeli practice of shamelessly harassing through threats and intimidation United Nations staff carrying out their mandate. They had a duty to describe in detail all of the human-rights violations that the State of Israel continuously committed against the Palestinians. Any witness to the facts could not help referring to the terrible suffering endured by the Palestinian people.

35. **Mr. von Kaufmann** (Canada) asked the Special Rapporteur whether the notion of enforceability of economic, social and cultural rights, which he defended in his report (A/58/330), was the most effective way to ensure the right to food, the follow-up of its implementation and the protection of all groups concerned, including vulnerable population groups. Canada implemented many strategies, policies and programmes intended to ensure the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Canadian delegation wished to know the Special Rapporteur's views on the idea that there were various alternative approaches to ensuring the right to adequate food, especially since there existed no agreed definition of that right and the relevant definition provided in General Comment No. 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was not binding.

36. Concerning transnational corporations, the Canadian delegation wondered whether compelling the non-State actors to respect human rights did not involve some risk of eventually diverting the attention of the international community from the primary responsibility of the States in that area.

37. **Mr. de Laurentis** (United States of America) recalled that his country had often expressed its diverging philosophical view on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur during debates on the various resolutions submitted on that issue. Although the report of the Special Rapporteur (A/58/330) contained very useful observations on the need to improve the right to food of women and girls worldwide, the representative contested the report's conclusions and recommendations. He doubted various assertions in the report, particularly those regarding the nature and scope of the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate food and water; the obligation of States under international law to restrict the activities of corporations that might violate that right; and the idea that corporations themselves, not only States, could violate the relevant international legislation.

38. The representative believed that the Special Rapporteur provided formal recommendations on issues outside his mandate, and criticized him once more for using his official duties to further his own

political views. The United States persisted in its deep reservations about the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and the way in which he carried it out. Lastly, he protested about the fact that, contrary to usual United Nations practice, the report drawn up after the Special Rapporteur's mission to the Occupied Territories had been rendered public before being transmitted to the State criticized.

39. **Mr. Ziegler** (Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food), replying to the questions of the Italian delegation, said that it was very difficult to explain the causes of discrimination against women regarding access to the means of production, revenue or real estate property. Contrary to a view frequently entertained, that discrimination was not particular to the so-called Third World societies. In that connection, the Special Rapporteur cited the example of his own country, Switzerland, second wealthiest in the world, where the average salaries of women were 30 percent lower than those of men for equal work. The problem of discrimination was universal, although it appeared under particular variants in such countries as the Niger, where women were subject to customary law, the rules of a modern State (inherited from the colonial past), and Muslim law. The Special Rapporteur admitted that he could not provide a brief answer to the question asked, but pointed out that the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 2001/25 had encouraged him to integrate a gender-specific perspective in the activities under his mandate, and that was what he would try to do.

40. The Special Rapporteur took note of the Israeli delegation's multiple reproaches against him and denied that he was oblivious to the terrible and tragic violence in the Middle East: he was appalled by that situation, as any sane and sensitive human being would be. More than 800 Israelis and more than 2,700 Palestinians, men, women and children, had been killed since the start of the second Intifada in September 2000, and the Special Rapporteur reiterated his view that each one of those deaths was intolerable, regardless of the victims' nationality, and unreservedly condemned that tragedy.

41. The Special Rapporteur stressed that his report on the right to food in the Occupied Palestinian Territories could not have been written without cooperation from the Israeli civil society and his colleagues at the Hebrew University, Betselem, the Centre for free information and the "Rabbis for Human Rights" organization. He thanked them for helping him extensively to understand the situation and to draw up his report.

42. The Special Rapporteur acknowledged that he had held very frank discussions with the Israeli Ministry of Defence, which had been particularly open and very precise in its argumentation. The frequent references to security issues in a report on the right to food in the occupied Palestinian territory were due to the fact that the statistics provided by the World Bank were not contested by the Israeli military authorities – in fact, one official had even stated to the Special Rapporteur that he regretted the situation. However, no argument based on security considerations could in any way justify the observable humanitarian disaster. Any free State in the world was certainly entitled to ensure the security of its citizens, but collective punishment was prohibited by international law. Furthermore, Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibited mass forcible transfers by the occupying power.

43. Concerning the last remark made by the representative of Israel, the Special Rapporteur said that he did not understand in what way his report would hinder future negotiations in view of the creation of a Palestinian State with international frontiers, as proposed in the relevant United Nations resolutions and the roadmap. On the contrary, respect for human rights by the Palestinians and the Israelis was a key to the success of the peace plan.

44. To the representative of Egypt, whom he thanked for his kind words, the Special Rapporteur specified that the wall (for the Palestinians) or security fence (for the Israelis), largely built on Palestinian territories, did not follow the green line. Two hundred thousand Palestinians had lost their land and water sources as a result of the 280 km of wall already constructed. If building continued eastward, as provided for in the plan shown to him by the Israeli Ministry of Defence, the entire Jordan Valley would be taken away from the Palestinians, and as a result any independent Palestinian State would not be viable. The position of the United Nations on the issue was that construction of that wall should cease immediately because it ran counter to the roadmap.

45. Replying to the first of the two important questions raised by Liechtenstein, the Special Rapporteur recognized that, in addressing the issue of

discrimination against women, he had not referred to its possible adverse impact on the entire lifecycle of the population as a result of the fact that malnutrition during pregnancy or during the first five years of life produced persons with disabilities, permanently incapable of leading a normal life. Regarding the contradiction, identified by the Liechtenstein delegation, between paragraphs 44-49 and 62 of the report (A/58/330) on the legal rules to adopt in order to compel multinational corporations to comply with human-rights standards, the Special Rapporteur recognized the contradiction and justified it by explaining that he was currently conducting analytical work, drawing up a list of the proposals put forth. Since some large multinational corporations often wielded more power than governments, it was important to establish standards that they would then be required to respect.

46. Thanking Tunisia for its kind words, the Special Rapporteur replied to the specific technical question by the Palestinian Observer that the report on Palestine had been, since 31 October 2003, posted as an official document on the web site of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Special Rapporteur on the right to food was the first of the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights whose visit Israel had accepted, and he thanked the Israeli Government for allowing him to circulate in the Occupied Territories and talk to the Water Commissioner and the military authorities, but pointed out that Israel's positive attitude could not have predetermined the report's conclusions – very close to the position of Israeli civil society, both religious and secular, that the right to food should be ensured in the Occupied Territories.

47. The Special Rapporteur referred to Canada's pioneering work in the area of the right to food in that area. It was certainly necessary to provide for enforceability with regard to multinational corporations, new non-State actors, often extremely powerful, particularly in the agricultural sector. A special rapporteur, however, was merely an academic mandated to compile a list of the solutions proposed in the international documentation, in inter-State fora, by civil society and by universities. He was nevertheless gratified to observe that during the debate nobody had denied the existence of the problem.

48. Referring to the comments of the United States representative, the Special Rapporteur underscored the profound differences of opinion between that country and the Special Rapporteur. The United States did not recognize social, economic and cultural rights, particularly the right to food, and believed that the market should be allowed to set the right price. When the market malfunctioned, international aid had to be provided on a charity basis. The Commission on Human Rights, which had given the Special Rapporteur his mandate, subscribed to a vision of the world diametrically opposed to that neo-liberal standpoint and wished to establish social, economic and cultural rights of a collective and individual character. That did not mean that the United States were not interested in the global problem of hunger: they were the main donor to the World Food Programme (WFP), which in 2002 had fed 92 million persons, and funded more than 25 percent of the ordinary budget of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Problems occurred no matter what axiomatic view was taken on the right to food. As an example, the Special Rapporteur referred to the North American transnational corporation Bechtel which, when Bolivia privatized water, charged at Cochabampa rates that population groups with a modest income could not afford, setting off a revolt. Concerning the remark that the report on the Special Rapporteur's mission to the Palestinian territories had been published before being transmitted to the Israeli Government, the Special Rapporteur pointed out that on the Internet the report was followed, on the same web site, by Israel's reasoned and detailed reply. The Special Rapporteur was not responsible for the early publication: on 12 September 2003, he had delivered the report to the Office of the High Commissioner for transmission to the Palestinian and Israeli missions, according to the regulations. At the same time, his collaborators had sent directly to the Israeli, Palestinian and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) copies of the report to enable them to formulate any factual objections. One of those NGOs had published the report. Concluding, the Special Rapporteur thanked the United States representative for his persistent mistrust, which spurred him to work with even greater energy on promoting the right to food.

Organization of work

49. **Mr. Xia Bohua** (China), noting the delegations' interest in human-rights issues and regretting that time constraints prevented them from participating in the

general debate, proposed, in order to avoid complicating unnecessarily the work of the missions, that a period of specific duration should be devoted to general debate on a daily basis.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.